VIII. EARLY RUNIC INSCRIPTIONS IN ENGLAND

1. Introduction.

The early English and Frisian runic traditions used a *fuþork* of 26 letters, i.e. the common Germanic *fuþark* extended with two additional runes: ᚪ and ᚩ. The new graphemes were obviously needed to represent phonemes developed from the allophones of long and short *a*, the results of Ingveonic soundchanges. This Anglo-Frisian *fuþork* remained in use in Frisia and England throughout their runic period, in both regions supplemented with several varieties. From the 7th century onwards, runic writing in England underwent a separate development, and the *fuþork* was extended to over 30 characters. Runic writing became closely connected with the Latin scriptoria, which is demonstrated by ecclesiastical runic monuments and an abundant use of runes in manuscripts.

Two 7th c. inscriptions from the post-conversion period, or Period II (see Introduction), are included in this chapter: St. Cuthbert's coffin and the Whitby comb. Both items bear texts with a clearly Christian content. St. Cuthbert's coffin is interesting from a runological and historical point of view, because it shows some runic peculiarities and it can be dated accurately. The Whitby comb has a Christian text, partly in Latin. Examples of later Anglo-Saxon rune-writing have been found in Germany, France and Italy, as a result of travelling Anglo-Saxon clerics and pilgrims.

The phonemic changes known as monophthongization, fronting and nasalization, may have taken place independently in OFris and OE (Looijenga 1996[b]:109ff.) Monophthongization concerns Gmc **ai* > OE *ā* [72]; OFris *ǣ, ē* [73] and sometimes *ā*; Gmc **au* > OE *ēa*, in OFris *ā*. Fronting concerns a shift from *a* > *æ* when not followed by a nasal consonant. Nasalization concerns *a* > *o* before nasal consonant and *a + n* > *ō* before voiceless spirant. Monophthongization, fronting and nasalization took place in all Old English dialects and also in Old Frisian (and neighbouring languages). According to Campbell (1959:50) "the evidence for the dating of these changes is tenuous, though obviously they all belong to the period between the Germanic invasion of England c. 450, and the oldest surviving texts *circa* 730-50". The oldest surviving text can now be dated to the 5th c.

The linguistic developments affected the (Gmc) monophthongs and diphthongs *a*, *ai* and *au* and induced a change in the use of the **ansuz* rune ᚨ , which, apparently, could not be used for the products of the soundchange: the allophones developing into phonemes *æ, ǣ* and *o, ō*. It is puzzling that these were not rendered by the **ehwaz* and **ōdilan* runes, and that the allophones induced changes in the graphic system, which resulted in graphic variations on the old **a** rune (Looijenga 1996[b]:109).

The additional Anglo-Frisian runes ᚪ *āc* and ᚩ *ōs*, were recorded at different dates in England, the earliest one, *ōs*, in the 5th century on the Undley bracteate. The double-barred **h** ᚻ which

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[72] The OE developments of Gmc **ai* and **au* took place, according to Luick (§ 291), in the 2rd - 4th c.

[73] A sound which according to Campbell (1959:52) "might well develop from *æi*. It is accordingly possible that *a* > *æ* before the monophthongization of *ai* to *ǣ* in OFris".

occurs on the Continent and in England, but not in Scandinavia, is attested rather late in England, on St. Cuthbert's coffin (698). Before this date the single-barred **h** was used in England, perhaps as a result of the Scandinavian descent of many English inhabitants.

In the present study, the first group of inscriptions comprises legible and (partly) interpretable texts; the second group consists of those inscriptions that are hardly legible and therefore hardly interpretable; some are not decipherable at all. Neither the legends of St. Cuthbert's coffin nor the Whitby comb present any specific runological difficulties. Here the problems are merely caused by damage and wear. The bracteates of Welbeck and Undley are listed among the Bracteates, Chapter VI.

Within the first group the inscriptions appear according to the type of inscribed object. I have examined most inscriptions personally, but in some cases I had to rely on photographs or drawings (Boarley, Watchfield, the coins, Selsey, Sandwich stone, St. Cuthbert's coffin[74]). The abbreviation BM indicates the British Museum. The information concerning the runic coins has been extracted from Blackburn (1991).

Surveys of English runic inscriptions have been published by Page (1973 and in an anthology of his numerous articles in 1995), Bruggink (1987), and Elliott (1959/1989). A handy checklist of the early inscriptions including drawings and a selected bibliography is presented by Hines (1990[b]). Quite some useful information is compiled in *Old English Runes and their Continental Background*, edited by Bammesberger (1991).

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[74] The coffin can be seen in the Cathedral Museum Durham, but its present state does not allow for personal inspection.

Map 8. Findspots of early runic objects in England.

2. CHECKLIST OF EARLY ENGLISH RUNIC INSCRIPTIONS

PERIOD I, legible and (partly) interpretable inscriptions.

SWORD EQUIPMENTS

1. *Ash Gilton*, (Kent). Pyramidal gilt silver sword pommel, no find-report. Dated 6th c. Seen in the Liverpool City Museum.
The runic inscription is surrounded by ornamental, incised and nielloed lines. The runes are difficult to read since the upper part of the inscription is rather abraded. The first and last parts of the inscription may consist of just some ornamental lines; the central part may be transliterated **??emsigimer????**.

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Page (1995:301) regards "most of the forms as attempts to give the appearance of an inscription without the reality". Although script-imitations do occur from this period (the legend reminds especially of *Hohenstedt*, Continental Corpus), in this case I consider it not unlikely that the carver meant to cut runes and that it is possible to decipher (some of) them.
em 1 sg. pres. ind. 'I am'. **sigimer** is a PN, nsm. *i*-stem, consisting of two well-known name-elements: OE *sige* 'victory', OS *sigi*, and *mēr* < Gmc **mēriz*, cf. OE *mǣre*, Go. *mērs* 'famous', cf. *Thorsberg* **niwajemariz**, and the PN *Segimerus* (Schönfeld 1965:204f.). Elliott (1989:50) read **sigimer**. Odenstedt (1981:37-48) read *sigi m(ic) ah* 'Sigi has me'. According to Odenstedt, the **h** is of the double-barred type. In my opinion only the part **em sigimer** stands out clear and a possible presence of a double-barred **h** is very doubtful. The runes for **e** have a peculiar form; something in between ᚢ and ᛗ . The **s** has four strokes.

2. *Chessel Down II*, (Isle of Wight). Silver plate attached to a scabbard mouthpiece of a ring-sword. Dated first h. 6th c. It was found in a rich man's grave. Seen in the BM, London.
At the back of the mouthpiece a repairstrip with runes is attached, hence the strip with the inscription "is a secondary addition to the mount, and perhaps the latest feature on the sword", according to Hawkes & Page (1967:17). They proceed by saying that "the repairs to the back of the mount, and the cutting of the runes, must have taken place shortly before burial". The presence of an *ōs* rune points to an English provenance of the inscription, although there are strong Scandinavian influences in the ornamentation of the mouthpiece (Hawkes & Page 1967:13f.). The Gilton, Sarre and the Faversham ring-swords belong to a homogeneous group of Kentish ring-swords, according to Hawkes & Page (1967:10). The runes are engraved very neatly and read **æko:?ori**.

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The first rune of the first part may be transliterated **æ** in **æko**, as fronting of West Gmc *a* in pre-OE probably had taken place before the 6th c. I suppose it is a PN; it reminds of *Akaz*, bracteate *Åsum-C*, (see Bracteates Corpus, nr. 3). If the same name is involved (which may very well be so, cf. De Vries 1962:4, who reconstructs *akr* m. PN on the basis of runic **akaR**

and OE *Aca*, and OHG *Aho*), the final *-az* would have become *-a* in West Gmc (cf. **swarta** < *swartaz* in *Illerup I*, Danish Corpus). West Gmc masculine names ending in *-a* and *-o* are declined weak, hence **æko** is a nsm. *n*-stem (possibly Frankish/Merovingian influence because of the ending *-o*, cf. *Boso* in *Freilaubersheim*, Germany. Anglo-Saxon masculine names of the weak declension mostly end in *-a*). It is remarkable that the final **o** is written with the Anglo-Frisian *ōs* rune ᚩ, which developed from the older **ansuz* rune.

Since the inscription exhibits two different **o**-runes: the Anglo-Frisian *ōs* in **æko** and the older **ōđilan* ᚩ in **?ori**, I suppose this was done to reflect a different pronunciation. The **o** in **?ori** may represent something in between *o* and *æ*, although *i*-mutation may not yet have taken place or may not have been completed at the time the inscription was made.

The value of the initial rune ᚠ in the second part of the inscription is obscure. It has the form of the later Anglo-Saxon **s**, also called bookhand-**s**, but this inscription is dated too early to expect influence from bookhand. It probably does not represent **k**, since the other **k** rune in the same inscription has another form: ᚴ , like in *Chessel Down I* and *Hantum* (Dutch Corpus). It might denote **l**, such as can be found in bracteate legends (see Bracteates Corpus). In that case the word should be transliterated **lori**, perhaps dsn. *a*-stem *lori* 'loss' (cf. Campbell § 571, 572).

BROOCHES

3. *Boarley*, (Kent). Cast copper alloy disc-brooch. Dated late 6th, early 7th c. Found near Maidstone, now in the BM, London (Parsons 1992:7-8).
The runes are in an arc defined by framing lines. One might read **atsil** or **ætsil**

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The **a** or, in view of the dating, **æ** is a mirror-rune. When taking the medial rune for a insecurely carved **s** in four strokes, one may read **ætsil**. **ætsil** can be divided in two words: **æt** prep., OE *æt* 'at, to, with', and **sil,** short for OE *sigil, sigel* f. (later *n.*) 'sun', or 'brooch', see below: *Harford Farm*. When reading **æt sil** the interpretation may be 'to/at/with the brooch'. Presumably the carver did not finish the intended text.

4. *Harford Farm*, (Caistor-by-Norwich, Norfolk). Composite brooch with gold and garnets. Dated ca. 650. Found in a grave. Seen in the BM, London. According to Hines (1991[b]) the brooch has typical parallels from Milton, Oxfordshire and Ixworth, Suffolk.
The runes are clearly legible: **luda:gibœtæsigilæ**.

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Considering the date of the brooch, around 650, *i*-mutation might have taken place, therefore the transliteration of the **ōđilan* rune is *æ*. The inscription is preceded by a slanting stroke, which I take for an ingress-sign, not unlike the one in *Bernsterburen* (The Netherlands). A word-divider consisting of 6 dots follows **luda**, thus severing the subject - the name of the repairer - from the rest of the sentence, which are verb and object written together.

This practice reminds of _Freilaubersheim_ (Continental Corpus) **boso:wraetruna**.

luda may be a PN _Lud(d)a_ nsm. _n_-stem (Searle 1897); _lud-_ cf. OE _lēod-_ m. 'prince, man' OS _liud_, OFris _liōd_.

gibœtæ is 3 sg. pret. ind. 'repaired', cf. the later OE inf. _gebētan_ 'to repair'. _gi-_ instead of earlier _gæ-_, later OE _ge-_ (Campbell § 369). The final inflectional ending _-æ_ is regular for this form of the verb at this date (Campbell § 750). **sigilæ** 'brooch' asf. _ō_-stem, _sigle_ or _sigel_, _n_-stem in later OE. This word may descend from Latin _sigillum_ (cf. Hines 1991[a], 79f). Another instance of **sigila** on a brooch appears in a Continental inscription: _München-Aubing II_ (Continental Corpus): **segalo sigila**.

Besides the **desaiona** and **pada** tremisses, dated ca. 660-670, this inscription shows one of the earliest attestations of the _āc_ rune in the English Corpus (apart perhaps from _āc_ in _hlāw_, _Loveden Hill_, below nr. 7, however uncertain). The **s** rune is a rare variety on the vertical zig-zag line; the example in this inscription has five strokes, so far unparalleled in England. (Hines, 1991[a]:79f.). _Ash Gilton_ and _Boarley_ have **s** in four strokes. 'Luda repaired (the) brooch'.

5. _West Heslerton_, (North Yorkshire). Copper-alloy cruciform brooch. Dated first h. 6th c. (Hines 1990[b]:446). In the possession of the excavator.
One can read either **neim** (read from right to left) or **mien** (from left to right).

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The brooch was found in a woman's grave and can be regarded typical of the general area in which it was found, according to Hines (1990[b]:446). Page (1987:193 & 1995:301) disputes the transliteration of rune 4; he reads **neim**, or, less likely, **neie**. Hines (1990[b]:445f.) presents a drawing from which **neim** or **mien** can be read. I suggest to take **mien** as an (ortho)graphical error for _mene_ 'necklace, collar, ornament, jewel' (cf. Roberts 1992:198). Holthausen (1963:219) lists OE _mene_ m. 'Halsband, Schmuck', OS _meni_, OHG _menni_, ON _men_. This inscription belongs then to a well-known and wide-spread group of runic texts that name the very object, e.g. _Caistor-by-Norwich_ and _Harford Farm_ (English Corpus), _Aquincum_ and _Fallward_ (Continental Corpus) and the combs from _Oostum and Toornwerd_ (The Netherlands).

A BRONZE PAIL, POTS AND URNS.

6. _Chessel Down I_, (Isle of Wight). A copiously decorated bronze pail. Dated 520-570 (Hines 1990[b]:438). Found in a rich woman's grave. Seen in the BM, London. The pail may have been an import from the eastern Mediterranean. The runes are cut over the original decoration, thus they are a later addition. There is no clue as to when and where the runes were carved.
The runes were cut between framing lines and are partly damaged by corrosion, but the end of the legend is clear: **???bwseeekkkaaa**.

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The **s** is in three strokes; the **k** has a similar form as in <u>*Chessel Down II*</u>, above nr. 2, <u>*Hantum*</u>, **skanomodu** (both Dutch Corpus), and the <u>*Vimose*</u> plane (Danish Corpus). The sequence reminds of the medieval Scandinavian runic *þistil, mistil, kistil* formula (as for instance is cut on the GØRLEV stone, Sjælland, Denmark, showing the sequence **þmkiiissstttiiilll**). When operating in the same way, we would get here: **bekka, wekka, sekka**, three masculine personal names, all nsm. *n*-stem. Two of the names are known from the Old English travelogue Widsith 115: *Seccan sohte ic ond Beccan*. Both names are here in the acc. sg. *Becca* was the name of one of Eormanric's followers, ruler of the Banings. In Widsith, his full name was *Þeodberht* (Malone 1962:196). In legend, he was the evil counsellor who advised Eormanric to murder Sunilda. The *Secca* of Widsith is the hypocoristic form of Sigiwald (cf. Malone 1962:131f. and 196f.). *Wecca* reminds of the name of Wehha, the father of Wuffa, king of East Anglia, who started his reign in 570 AD.

If the Becca and Secca on the pail are the same as the historical Becca and Secca, this might explain the exotic origin of the pail, since Secca had to flee and live in exile in Italy (Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum* iii, 13, 16, 23f.).

<u>7. *Loveden Hill*</u>, (Lincolnshire). Cremation urn. The dating cannot be any more close than 5th - 6th c. (Hines 1990[b]:443). The urn was found in a great urnfield. Seen in the BM, London. The runes are carved in a slipshod style; some lines are cut double. The division marks consist of double vertical lines. Especially the middle and last part of the inscription are difficult to read.

The somewhat jumpy style allows no absolute statements (such as "zweifellos vorzuziehende Lesung **w**", according to Nedoma 1991-1993:116) about the identity of the runes, or about the impossibility of having a hook-shaped **k** < in the inscription (because there would be no further attestations of that form in the English Corpus, according to Nedoma 1991-1993:117). Apart from the fact that one cannot base such firm statements on so little surviving material, there is a near parallel in <u>*Watchfield*</u>: the 'roof'-shaped **k** ∧. Besides, the 'Kent' or 'Bateman' brooch (see Continental Corpus nr. 21) has a **k** in the form < . This brooch is regarded as "either Anglo-Saxon or Continental Germanic" (Page 1995:172f.).

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The first part, consisting of seven runes, is relatively easy. The initial rune is an **s**, carved in three strokes; the second rune is the yew rune which obviously denotes a vowel, transliterated **ï**. The sixth rune may be a double-carved **l**, or an **æ** with a double headstaff **sïþæbld** or **sïþæbæd**. Although an ending is lacking, I conjecture a female PN is meant, nsf. *wō*-stem, a compound consisting of **sïþæ-** cf. OE *(ge)sīđ* 'companion' and **bæd** *beadu* f. 'battle, war', ON *bǫđ*, OS *Badu* in female PNs. But when reading **sïþæbld** *Siþæb(a)ld* we have a masc. PN, with a second element *-bald*, OE *beald* 'bold', nsm. *a*-stem.

The second part consists of four runes. The first and last runes may be both *thorn*'s, or the first one is a *thorn* and the last one a *wynn*, since this graph has, in comparison to the first rune, its hook nearly at the top of the headstaff. The two runes in between could be **iu** or **ic**, hence one may read **þiuþ** or **þiuw** or **þicþ**. A reading **þiuw** 'maid' has been proposed by Bammesberger (1991[b]:127). An interpretation **þiuþ** as 'good', cf. Go. *þiuþ* n. 'something good', presents semantical difficulties. Odenstedt (1991:57) proposed to read **þicþ** 3 sg. pres. ind. 'gets, receives' < **þigiþ*, cf. OE *đicgan* 'to take, to get' (Holthausen 1963:364). The third part consists of four runes; the first rune may be a single-barred **h**; it looks like Latin N. A similar N-shaped sign can be found on the *Sandwich* stone (nr. 19). The last two runes are rather obscure; they appear to be partly intermingled. I read them as *āc* followed by a somewhat unclear **w**. Thus I take the word to be **hlaw**, asm/n. *wa*-stem 'grave'.

The whole sentence may be read: **sïþæbæ/ld ‖ þicþ** or **þiuw ‖ hlaw**. The text concerns either a man: *Siþæbald* or a woman: *Siþæbæd*, who 'gets (a) grave'. When reading **þiuw** for the second part, we obtain: '*Siþæbæd* (the) maid (her) grave'.

8. *Spong Hill*, (Norfolk). Three cremation urns, dated 5th c. (cf. Hines 1990[b]:434). Seen in the Castle Museum, Norwich.

The urns are decorated with runic stamps, exhibiting mirror-runes, also known as *Spiegelrunen*.

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The runes can be read either way: from right to left and vice versa (Pieper 1987:67-72). They represent the well-known word **alu**, which is a frequent used 'formula-word' in Scandinavian inscriptions, literally meaning 'ale' (see Bracteates Corpus). Since the runes are stamped in the weak clay, there might be a connection with the manufacturing of bracteates, which also bear stamped runic legends, such as **alu**. On the whole, **alu** may be taken as a word indicating some cult or ritual, in which the use of *ale* may have played a central role, perhaps in connection with a death cult.

THE EARLY GOLD AND SILVER COINS

9. *Kent II*, more than 30 specimens of the Pada coinage, the last of the runic groups of gold-coinage. There are five distinct types, four of which include the name **pada**, PN nsm. *n*-stem.

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According to Blackburn (1991:145) "Two of the types (..) are struck in base gold (..) and may be dated *c.* 660-70, while the other two (..) are known in both base gold (..) and fine silver. They thus span the transition from base gold shillings to new silver pennies (*sceattas*) and were probably struck *c.* 670-85". *Pada* is regarded as the moneyer, and the coinage is thought to be Kentish. The name *Pada < Bada* may originally be a Saxon name, OS *Bado, *Pado, Patto* (Kaufmann 1965:37), showing *Anlautverschärfung p < b. Bada <* Gmc **bađwō-* nsf. *wō*-stem, 'battle', cf. above, *Loveden Hill*. Names ending in *-a* are weak masculine names in OE.

10. *Kent III, IV*, the earliest silver *sceattas* with the legends **æpa** and **epa** appear in Kent at the end of the 7th c. (the Frisian *sceattas* and those from Ribe, Denmark, are mainly dated to the 8th and early 9th centuries).

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To the primary or intermediate types belongs the early variety with the legend **tæpa** ᛏᚫᚳᚪ, the prototype for the Frisian runic issue, according to Blackburn (1991:175f.) The first East Anglian specimens of **æpa, epa** belong to a secondary group dating from ca. 720 or somewhat earlier.

The soundchange reflected in the transition from *Æpa* to *Epa* is as likely to have occurred in the Kentish dialect as in an Anglian one, according to Blackburn[75] (1991:152). *Tæpa* as well as *Epa, Æpa* probably are moneyers' names, nsm. *n*-stems.

11. *Suffolk*, three gold shillings (one from St. Albans, two from Coddenham in Suffolk); all struck from the same pair of dies. Dated circa 660.
The runes read from right to left: **desaiona**.

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According to Blackburn (1991:144f.), the coins probably are from the same mint as the coinage of *Pada*, since the earliest *Pada* types take their obverse design from the *desaiona* coins, and these two issues are the only ones from the second half of the 7th c. employing runic script. I have no explanation for the legend **desaiona**, nor have I found one elsewhere.

MISCELLANEOUS

12. *Caistor-by-Norwich*, (Norfolk). An astragalus found in an urn. Dated to circa 425-475 (Hines 1990[b]:442). Seen in the Castle Museum, Norwich. The urn included 35 to 38 knucklebones, which were used as gaming pieces; all but one are of sheep. The exceptional one is of a roe and bears a runic inscription, according to Knol (1987:284). The object plus inscription could be an import from Scandinavia.

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[75] Other personal names on *sceattas* are: **æþiliræd** (19 pieces, early 8th c.), **tilberçt**, the penultimate rune being the yew rune, here indicating a guttural sound (10 pieces, dated early 8th c.), and **wigræd** (Blackburn 1991:155-158).

The runic inscription is transliterated **raïhan**[76].

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The **h** is single-barred. The meaning of the text is 'roe' or 'of a roe'. Sanness Johnsen (1974:38-40) takes **raïhan** as an oblique form of a masc. noun *n*-stem; OE *rāha, rāh, rāhdēor*.

The graphic representation of the diphthong ai by **aï** suggests that the yew rune ᛂ is used here only as a variety on the **i** rune, since OE *ā* < Gmc **ai*. Bammesberger (1991ª:389-408) interprets **raïhan** as '(this is) Raihan's'. It seems to me, that the text belongs to a group of inscriptions in which the naming of the *material* or the *object* plays an important role, like on the combs reading 'comb' and the *Hamwic* knucklebone (The Netherlands, nr. 17) reading **katæ** 'knucklebone'. The BRANDON inscription (Norfolk, 8th or 9th c.) on a piece of antler reads: **wohs wildum de(*or*)an**, OE for: '(this) grew on a wild animal'. Another piece of antler, from DUBLIN, has an ON text: **hurn:hiartaR** 'deer's horn'. *Fallward* (Continental Corpus, nr. 15) has **ksamella** 'footstool'. And there is Franks Casket (first half 8th c.) with **hronæsban** 'whalebone'.

13. *Watchfield*, (Oxfordshire). Copper-alloy fittings with a runic inscription. The fittings belonged to a leather purse-mount (decayed), containing a balance and weights. Dated 520-570 (Hines 1990ᵇ:439) . Now in the Oxfordshire Museum, Woodstock. The fittings were found in a man's grave, in a gravefield on the borders of Mercia and Wessex. The gravegoods of this 6th-century grave is best parallelled to Kentish and Frankish graves. Early Anglo-Saxon balance remains are almost entirely found in Kent and the Upper Thames region. Both areas demonstrate contacts with the Continent, and with Frankish territories in particular, according to Scull (1986:127).

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The inscription is easy to read: **hæriboki:wusæ**. There are no typical Anglo-Frisian or Anglo-Saxon runes. There may be no trace of *i*-mutation, as the inscription may be too early for that and **i** is retained in **-boki**. There is also no syncope of the **-i** in **hæri-**. Fronting of Gmc *a* > *æ* probably has taken place, hence the transliteration **hæriboki**. This is probably a PN, consisting of *hæri-* < Gmc **harja-*, m. *ja*-stem 'army' and *-bōki*, g/dsn. *i*-stem 'beech' [compare **tunwini** (THORNHILL I), Campbell § 601]. The **h** is single-barred; the **o** is rendered by the **ōđilan* rune; the **k** has the form of a 'roof' ᚼ , otherwise known from the Continental Corpus and a few bracteates (see Chapter IV.11). The **æ** in **hæriboki** has seriffes: triangular terminals of the sidetwigs. The use of seriffes is a stylistic peculiarity of almost all insular scripts (Bischoff 1990:86). The **s** is in three strokes. The occurrence of single-barred **h**,

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76 The consideration that the inscription were (pre-) OE and should be transliterated ***ræïhan**, is rejected, because **a** in **aï** is not fronted, as monophthongization of *ai* > *ā* preceded the fronting of *a* > *æ*. The ending is **-an** and not **-æn**, because Gmc *a* was not fronted before nasals. The form *raïhan* seems archaic, because intervocalic *-h-* is preserved and monophthongization of *ai* > *ā*, which happened in OE and North-Gmc before *r, h*, did not take place. Remarkable is, that the diphthong *ai* is represented by the digraph **aï**, a combination of **a** and the yew rune **ï**. The same orthography is found in *Pforzen* (Continental Corpus, nr. 33) **aïlrun**, early 6th c.

roofshaped **k** and a seriffed **æ** seems to point to a mixed runic tradition: partly Scandinavian, partly Continental and partly Anglo-Saxon. The compound name *Hæribōki* may literally be the name of a soldier: 'Armybeech', or 'Battletree', no bad *kenning* for a warrior. *Wusæ* may be a woman's name, g/dsf. *ō*-stem. The unaccented final vowel is written with the *æsc* rune and denotes unaccented *a > æ* (cf. Campbell § 333 and § 587). The meaning might be 'for Haribok, from Wusæ'. On the other hand, I think **wusæ** may be read as **þusæ** 'this one', cf. *Westeremden B* **þusa**, the accusative of a demonstrative pronoun, cf. Seebold (1990:422). One may interpret the text as follows: 'Hariboki's (possession), this one', an owner's formula, cf. *Westeremden B* 'Wimœd has this'.

A third possibility is to suppose that the *wynn* of **wusæ** has been carved incompletely, and actually a **b** was meant, in *bu(r)sæ* f. 'purse' (cf. *Bezenye*, Continental Corpus, which has a **b** rune with only one pocket in **arsiboda**). A semantically similar solution has been put forward by Odenstedt (1991:62), who suggested one may read **pusa** 'bag', the *wynn* taking for a *p* instead of *w*. Since the inscription is carved on a purse, a naming of the object: 'H's purse' is not unlikely. Either way, the inscription can be included in a well-known and wide-spread group of runic texts: two names, or an owner's formula, or the naming of the object in combination with the name of the owner.

14. *Wakerley*, (Northamptonshire). Copper-alloy square-headed brooch, found at a cemetery site. Now in the Museum at Northampton. Date: 525-560 (Hines 1990[b]:440). The runic brooches found in England are mostly indigenous. The Wakerley brooch belongs to a group of Anglo-Saxon square-headed brooches, according to Hines. The runes may be read **buhui**.

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The second and fourth runes denote probably **u**; they have rather short sidetwigs. The **h** is single-barred. I wonder whether **buh-** is cognate with OE *bēag* m., OS *bōg* 'ring, piece of jewellery etc.', OE *boga*, OS *bogo*, ON *bogi* 'bow', inf. OE *būgan* 'to bend'. The **h** in internal position might represent a velar or glottal spirant (Campbell §50, note 3 and §446). The text of the inscription might present a synonym for 'brooch'.

3. Illegible or uninterpretable inscriptions and single-rune inscriptions.

15. *Dover*, (Kent). Composite brooch, found in a woman's grave. The brooch is of a well-known Kentish brooch type, made of gold, silver, garnet and shell (Page 1973:29, Hawkes & Page 1967:20); dated late 6th, early 7th c. (Hines 1990[b]:447). Seen in the BM, London.

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Two clusters of runes are set in framing lines, as if the manufacturer wanted to imitate stamps. One inscription has **þd**, the other can be read from either side: the first three runes are possibly **bli**, after turning the object 180°, one may read **bkk** or **bll**, since the rune with the form ᛚ may denote **l**, like it is sometimes found on bracteates.
I have no interpretation.

16. *Upper Thames Valley*, a group of four gold coins, struck from two pair of dies, emerged from two findplaces in the Upper Thames Valley. Dated in the 620s. The runic inscriptions on the reverses have found no satisfactory explanation, according to Blackburn (1991:144). One group has: **benu:tigoii** or **tigoii/benu:**. The other has **benu:+:tidi** or **+:tidi/benu:**.

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I have no interpretation.

17. *Willoughby-on-the-Wolds*, (Nottinghamshire). Copper-alloy bowl. Date: late 5th or 6th c. Possibly an import from the Rhineland.

Single rune **a** ᚨ at the bottom of the interior. This type of bowl especially turns up in rich graves. The grave contained some amber beads and a small-long brooch 5th or 6th c.

18. *Cleatham*, (South Humbershire). Copper-alloy hanging bowl, found in a woman's grave in a cemetery. Now in the Borough Museum, Scunthorpe. The bowl belongs to a tradition apparently derived from the Roman Period and maintained in Celtic areas. As Anglo-Saxon gravegoods, these bowls are datable to the late 6th and 7th centuries, according to Hines (1990[b]:444).
The runes are faint and surrounded by probably intrusive scratches: **??edih** or **hide??**.

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The **h** is single-barred. No interpretation, though one might consider an object's name, or a PN.

19. *Sandwich/Richborough*, (Kent). Stone. Now in the Royal Museum at Canterbury. According to Evison (1964:242-244) the runic text might yield ***ræhæbul** 'stag', showing a single-barred **h**, which resembles a Latin N. Only the middle part of the inscription **?ahabu?i** can be perceived.

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Evison dated it ca. 650. The inscription is in framing lines, and exceedingly worn. Others thought the object to be undatable (cf. Hines 1990[b]:448), but according to some new evidence, it can perhaps be dated to the period of the oldest English inscriptions (Parsons 1994[b]:318 with many references).

20. *Whitby I*, (Yorkshire). Jet disc, spindle whorl, three runes: **ueu**. No date. Seen in the BM, London.

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21. _Selsey_, (West Sussex). Two bits of gold found on the beach between Selsey and Bognor (Hines 1990[b]:448). Now in the BM, London. Date: late 6th - 8th c. One can read **brnrn** on one, **anmu** on the other (Hines); Page (1973:29, 163) reads tentatively **anmæl/r**. No interpretation.

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4. Possibly runic, non-runic and ornamental signs.

Willoughby-on-the Wolds, (Nottinghamshire). Brooch, which carries three **d** motives at various intervals on its circumference. Another **d**-motive can be noticed on a cruciform-brooch from Sleaford, Lincolnshire (Hines 1990[b]:450). A runic **d** motive can be just an ornamental sign, contrary to the **a** rune in nr. 17, above.

Barrington, (Cambridgeshire). A polished bone with perhaps just scratches. 5th or 6th c. Summer 1997 a parallel turned up in the Betuwe. This is also a piece of polished bone, with similar scratches. The Barrington bone piece is known as a pin-beater, for use in weaving, according to Hines (personal communication 26 Sept. 1997). He supposes the scratches are pseudo-runes, i.e. definitely not real runes, but imitations.

Sarre, (Kent). A sword pommel. It has some lines that might be interpreted as runic **t**, but it probably is an ornamental sign. Date late 5th, early 6th c.

Hunstanton Brooch, (Norfolk). A copper-alloy swastika brooch, dated 6th c. The brooch is an Anglian type of the 6th c. according to Hines (1990[b]:450). One of the 'arms' of the swastika bears a crosslike sign, which may be runic **g**. The cross has a sidetwig attached to one extremity, so a bindrune **gi** may be read, comparable to other inscriptions like **ga** in _Kragehul_ (Danish Corpus), **gæ** and **go** in _Undley_, **gi** in _Kirchheim Teck_ (Continental Corpus) and an ornament (or bindrune **ga**?) on an _Ebergefäss_ from Liebenau, Niedersachsen, Germany (cf. Looijenga 1995[b]:102-105).

5. PERIOD II.

22. _St. Cuthbert_, (Durham). Wooden coffin, inscribed with runes and Roman lettering. Dated 698, the year of St Cuthbert's death. Seen in the Cathedral Museum, Durham. The wood of the coffin has suffered much of weathering; the coffin itself is incomplete. According to Page (1988: 257-263) one can read some of the many names of apostles and saints that are written on the coffin, but most of the names are abraded to such a degree that they cannot be identified anymore. Therefore, only a part of the inscriptions is presented here; for a detailed account, see Page (1988) and Derolez (1983:83-85). What is left of the runes can be guessed at: **ihs xps <u>mat</u>(_t_)[h](_eus_)**

<u>ma</u> and possibly also **eu** are in bindrunes, the **t** is inverted ↓. The part [**h**](_eus_) is nearly vanished.
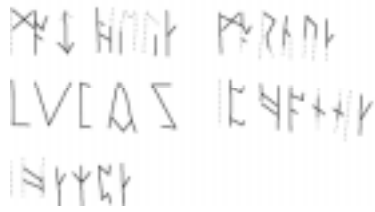
Then follows: **marcus**, LUCAS, quite clear and angular. **iohann(*i*)s**, the initial rune is **i** (!).
Then (R)(A)(P)(H)AEL and (M)A(RI)(A).

The names of the apostles Matthew, Marc and John are in runes, whereas the names of Luke and Mary are written in Roman letters. The Christ monogram is in runes. The **h** of **ihs** is a double-barred **h**, the first attestation so far of the English tradition. The **h mat(*t*)[h](*eus*)** and H (RAPH)AEL are not reconstructable.

The **s** runes are in the so-called "bookhand" fashion. The names of the apostles are in classic orthography. The spelling of the nomen sacrum is **ihs xps** *Ie(so)s Chr(isto)s*, curiously enough written after a Roman instance of a partly latinized Greek original; XPS = XPICTOC; the Greek P *rho* has been interpreted as the Latin capitalis P and subsequently rendered by the rune **p**! Another remarkable fact is, that the 15th rune, the old **z** rune Ⓨ, is used to render **x**. Page (1988:264) concludes that the clerics who wrote the text had no idea of the epigraphical application of the runic alphabet, but that instead they used runes picked out of manuscript runerows. Why the scribes wrote Roman and runes in one text, is unknown; a casual mixture of the two scripts, however, is not uncommon in Anglo-Saxon England. Another instance is FRANKS CASKET with a vernacular text mostly in runes, but on one side of the casket a Latin text appears, partly in runes and Roman lettering: HIC FUGIANT HIERUSALEM **afitatores** 'here the inhabitants flee from Jerusalem' (see also Page 1995:311f. on this "sophisticated attitude to language").

The context, according to Page (1988:263), is both local (East Northumbria) and learned. The use of runes and capitals together shows that runes had lost any (- if ever -) pagan association, some two generations after king Edwin of Northumbria accepted Christianity in 627.

23. *Whitby II*, (Yorkshire). Bone comb, date 7th c. Seen in the Whitby Museum, Whitby. The 7th-century comb was found in a rubbish dump of the former double-cloister, founded by abbess Hilda at *Streoneshalh*, now Whitby.
The runes read: **[*dæ*]us mæus godaluwalu dohelipæ cy**[.

Instead of **aluwaludo** one may read: **aluwaluda**. The comb is broken, therefore the initial two runes and the last runes of the inscription have disappeared. Yet there is no doubt as to the reading: **[*dæ*]us** followed by **mæus**. The **s** is in three strokes. The runes are carefully carved before and between the bolts. After **cy**[the comb is broken, but it is doubtlessly the beginning of a PN, e.g. *Cynewulf*. The *ōs* rune in **aluwaludo** is unclear, it could be **a**. The form *walud-* does not yet show the OE diphthong as in *wealdan* 'to rule'. The text reminds of OS Heliand *alowaldo*, adj. 'allruling'. The second *u* of *aluwaludo* is a svarabhakti vowel, which may be analogous to the first *-u-*, perhaps rhyming for the sake of rhythm. *helipæ* also has a svarabhakti *-i-* ; *helpæ* 3 sg. pres. subj. 'may he help', inf. *helpan*. The text would be: 'My God, may God allmighty help Cy....'

6. Summary and Conclusions

I have listed 21 items from Period I; the three urns from Spong Hill are counted as one entry. Likewise, the gold and silver coins are categorically counted as one entry. 14 inscriptions are legible and (partly) interpretable, 7 are legible but uninterpretable, or altogether illegible. 4 objects (not numbered) bear non-runic or ornamental signs. Of the 14 legible inscriptions from Period I, 7 consist of one word, 4 contain 2 words, 3 contain 3 words. There are 10 men's names and 2 women's names. The object itself is named 5 times. There may be 2 verbforms: **gibœtæ** and perhaps **þicþ**. There are 2 sentences: Harford Farm and Loveden Hill. I have counted 4 objects that belonged to a man and 8 objects that belonged to a woman.

Of Period II, 2 legible objects are listed. The inscriptions on St. Cuthbert's coffin exhibit Saints' and Apostles' names; the text on the Whitby comb heaves a deeply Christian sigh in a clear sentence.

Out of a total of 23 items from both Periods, at least 17 show a private context. 13 objects can be associated with graves; the coins are from hoards; the comb is a casual find from a rubbish heap. Of 6 objects the context is unknown (at least to me). It is difficult to draw conclusions from so little material. The most striking feature is the relative poor quality and small quantity of the early inscriptions in England, when compared with the wealth of runic texts of the post-conversion period from 700 till the 11th c. However, if one includes the 'Kent' brooch and the bracteates of Undley and Welbeck, there would be 26 items. Anyhow, the early English tradition is not out of the ordinary (see the General Introduction for the criteria of the two runic periods).
On the whole, the English runic tradition from the pre-Christian period is remarkably meagre. The increase of runic usage coincides with internal and external political developments and international contacts, with Merovingians and Frisians, for instance.

Of the 21 items belonging to Period I, 11 are made of metal (gold, silver, copper-alloy, bronze), 4 are of earthenware, 1 of bone, 1 of jet and there is 1 stone. Moreover there are about 40 gold coins and hundreds of silver *sceattas*, listed as 4 items. There are 2 pieces of weapon-equipment, 5 brooches; 4 bowls or pails, 4 urns. No wooden or antler objects have been recorded.
Approximately the same number of runic objects have survived in England from a period of three centuries as there has been found in The Netherlands from a period of four or five centuries. Two centuries of runic practice in Germany and surrounding countries have produced over three times as many runic survivors. So, during the 6th and 7th centuries, runic writing seems to have been thriving on the Continent, but the difference might be accidental. The runic gold and silver coins are characteristic of England and Frisia.
In Period I, runic writing in England was confined to the eastern parts south of the Humber, and to Kent and Wight, but seemed not to have been practised in Essex, Wessex and Sussex. This suggests that the Saxons did not write runes. But, the *Altsachsen* did, as is shown by the Fallward inscription! From the 5th and 6th centuries, we can observe certain links between Frankish (Merovingian) areas (North Gallia), North Germany, the Lower Rhine area and South England, which is shown by the exuberant inventory of some warrior-graves. (See also Chapter II). From the same period, runic writing is recorded from all those areas, except from North Gallia.

During the 7th c. runic writing spread to North England, especially to Northumbria. Initially, runic objects were sparingly found in East Anglia. But from the 7th c. onwards, the area provides interesting finds, such as the Harford Farm brooch, and, later on, objects from a settlement site such as Brandon (9th c.). A specific rich category are the runic coins. A linguistic link between England, Germany and Norway is demonstrated by the use of the word **sigila** for 'brooch' (Harford Farm and München-Aubing I). The Norwegian attestation is **siklisnAhli** (**sikli** = 'brooch') on the Strand brooch (Sør Trøndelag, dated around 700, see Krause 1966:48f.). Another link is demonstrated by the, supposedly syntactical, use of division marks, such as in **luda:gibœtæsigilæ** and **boso:wraetruna** (resp. Harford Farm and Freilaubersheim).

There are significant similarities with Danish inscriptions: the most striking are occurrences of mirror-runes, stamps and the word **alu** in one inscription: Spong Hill. Furtheron there is the sequence **gagoga** (or rather **gægogæ**) in Undley (GB), compare with **gagaga** in Krahehul (DK). These occurrences all date from the 5th and/or 6th centuries. Another remarkable link between England and Denmark may be the use of the *þistil, mistil, kistil* formula in *bekka, wekka, sekka* (Chessel Down I).

The atypical 4th rune of the Chessel Down II legend might be read as **l**, when compared with bracteate legends. The same rune form occurs in South Germany (Griesheim, Nordendorf B, both denoting **k** or **ch**), in Hailfingen with an unidentified value, and in Frisia denoting **æ** (Britsum). These differences can only be explained by assuming the existence of regional runic traditions.

The English tradition exploits two different **s**-runes, a zig-zag **s** � and the so-called bookhand **s** ⌐ . Period I exhibits the zig-zag form in a three- or more partite form known from the elder *fuþark* in Loveden-Hill, Watchfield, Harford Farm and perhaps on the Dover composite brooch.

Bookhand **s** appears to have been derived from the *insular miniscule*, a long *s*, used by Irish scribes. The fact that this **s** also occurs (and double-barred **h**) on St. Cuthbert's coffin together with the (partly latinized) Greek spelling of the *nomina sacra* XPS and IHS points to a learned interest in strange letter and language combinations. The seriffed runes may also have been the product of ecclesiastical influence. I think it probable that runic bookhand **s** and double-barred **h** were introduced by Irish scribes, possibly first in Northumbria. Double-barred **h** may have been imported by them from the Continent. Continental runic writing, especially in South Germany, seems to have been influenced by manuscript-writing, such as may be detected from the long-stretched forms of the runes. This aspect needs more investigation.

Bookhand **s** is furthermore found on the Kingmoor amulet ring, in the *futhorc*'s of the Brandon-pin and the Thames-scramasax (both 9th c.). It is also present in some manuscript runerows from the 9th c. The occurrence of the 'common' **s**-shape on a ring from Bramham Moor (9th c.) is remarkable, since ring and inscription are similar to Kingmoor.